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[64] not have the position of authority which they occupy in the village. The patriarchal order with its inflexible, all-pervasive family organization which prevails in the rural settlement does not exist in the town. Urban conditions, the capitalistic economy, industry and the social differentiation are progressively impinging upon and disintegrating the predominance of the family; moreover, these factors actually tend to break up the families themselves in the Arab town. It is certain that in the course of time differentiation and disintegration will gain momentum, the authority of the families weaken, the monotony of the upper class in town lessen and give way to changes. Nevertheless, the important families still exist and their influence is still immense. While their practical control over the economic life, agriculture and industry, has perceptibly shrunk, the social order which is more conservative mirrors these socio-economic changes only after a lapse of time. From the social point of view the power of the families is therefore still considerable, and as a consequence they can assert their rule within the realm of public-political activities. This predominance of the prominent families is reflected in every listing of municipal councillors, founders of companies, lawyers, members of government committees, invited guests to banquets, recipients of decorations and imperial honors, high officials, heads of political parties, clubs and associations, owners of newspapers and important journalists and the like.

It is noteworthy that among the Christian Arabs the leading families occupy a less domin-